

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims

Claims 1-26 were pending at the time of the Office Action.

5 Claims 1-26 are rejected.

No claims are canceled by the current response.

Please amend claims 1-21 and 23-25 as indicated below.

Please add new claim 27 as indicated below.

10 Accordingly, claims 1-27 are now pending and are provided herein
below in a complete listing of claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:
a platen;
15 a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a
media positioned on the platen;
~~a hollow vacuum conduit connected to said vacuum chambers; and~~
a vacuum source in permanent air communication with holes in the
platen through the vacuum chambers connected to said hollow vacuum conduit,
20 ~~said vacuum chambers being part of a first component and said hollow vacuum~~
~~conduit being part of a second, separate component.~~
2. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 27 ~~1~~, wherein
the first component is of a different material from the second component.
- 25 3. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 27 ~~1~~, wherein
the platen is of the same material as the first component.

4. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 27 4, wherein the first component is of plastics material and the second component is of sheet metal.

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5. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 27 4, wherein the first component comprises a plurality of sub components arranged along a single second component.

10 6. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 27 4, wherein the first component has a plurality of the vacuum chambers extending along its length and separated by transverse dividing walls.

15 7. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 27 4, wherein the first component has a plurality of the vacuum chambers in the direction of its width separated by one or more intermediate longitudinal walls.

20 8. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 6, wherein ~~said~~ the vacuum chambers have a plurality of openings in communication with said hollow vacuum conduit, the number, size and pattern of arrangement of said openings being selected in dependence upon desired air flow characteristics.

25 9. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 7, wherein ~~said~~ the vacuum chambers have a plurality of openings in communication with said hollow vacuum conduit, the number, size and pattern of arrangement of said openings being selected in dependence upon desired air flow characteristics.

10. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 27 ~~1~~, wherein the second component is a structural beam of the device.

11. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:
5 a platen; and

a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media configured to advance across the platen and for maintaining permanent air communication between holes in the platen and a vacuum source, wherein for at least part of the length of the platen, said vacuum chambers are arranged
10 one behind the other in the direction of media advance and are connected to the ~~a same~~ vacuum source through a hollow vacuum conduit.

12. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 11, wherein the vacuum chambers are arranged in rows perpendicular to the direction of media
15 advance.

13. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 12, wherein each vacuum chamber has one or more openings in each chamber communicating with the hollow vacuum conduit, the arrangement being such
20 ~~that the number and/or size and/or pattern of openings and the number, size and/or pattern of arrangement of the vacuum chamber openings~~ differ between the rows of the vacuum chambers.

14. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:
25 a platen; and
a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media positioned on the platen with respective walls separating adjacent pairs

of vacuum chambers along the platen, the vacuum chambers having a plurality of openings providing permanent air communication between holes in the platen and a vacuum source, and the vacuum chambers being connected via respective paths and through a hollow vacuum conduit to ~~[[a]]~~ the vacuum source that is capable of applying a negative pressure p , wherein said walls are positioned so that, for substantially all widths of media extending from one end of the platen towards the other, the lowest negative pressure applied to the media does not fall below q , where q is smaller than P .

10 15. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 14, wherein for selected widths of media ~~the arrangement is such that the~~ a lowest negative pressure applied to the media does not fall below r , where r lies between q and p .

15 16. (Currently amended) A method of determining where to locate chamber-separating dividing walls between the vacuum chambers of a media holddown device, said method comprising:

arranging the vacuum chambers and the dividing walls along a platen in a manner to substantially ensure that a sufficient negative pressure is
20 substantially always applied by a vacuum source to a media positioned on the platen whatever the width of the media; and

arranging ~~said chamber-separating~~ the dividing walls at a location or adjacent where the negative pressure would otherwise drop below a predetermined value q for a media having a corresponding width; and

25 providing a plurality of openings in the vacuum chambers to maintain a permanent air communication between the platen and the vacuum source.

17. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 16, further comprising:

positioning the locating dividing walls at one or more locations corresponding to pre-selected widths of media; and

5 ~~omitting said dividing wall arranging step if said dividing wall arrangement would coincide with or be substantially close to one of the dividing walls located in said preliminary step.~~

18. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 16, further comprising:

configuring ~~constituting~~ a component that forms forming the vacuum chambers, the configuring including integrating by a plurality of sub-components having end walls and extending along the platen; and

15 ~~omitting said chamber separating dividing wall if said chamber separating dividing wall would coincide with or be substantially close to a said end wall.~~

19. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 18, wherein each sub-component has an end connection region separated from a remaining

20 ~~portion of the sub-component by an end region dividing wall the sub-components each have end connection regions separated from the rest of the sub-component by end region dividing walls, said method further comprising omitting said chamber separating dividing wall if said chamber separating dividing wall would coincide with or be substantially close to said end region~~

25 ~~dividing wall.~~

20. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 16, further comprising:

connecting the vacuum chambers by ~~one or more respective~~ their openings to a hollow vacuum conduit which is connected to the vacuum source; and

determining the relative sizes of the openings to ~~assist in ensuring~~ ensure that sufficient negative pressure is substantially always applied.

21. (Currently amended) A media holddown device comprising:

10 a platen;

and a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media positioned on the platen with respective walls separating adjacent pairs of chambers along the platen, the vacuum chambers having one or more openings arranged to provide permanent air communication between the platen and a vacuum source through the chambers each being connected via one or more respective openings to a hollow vacuum conduit which is connected to [[a]] the vacuum source, wherein the number, size and/or pattern of said openings are different for at least some of said the vacuum chambers.

22. (Original) A device according to claim 21, wherein the platen has holes, at least some of which have a cross-section which is asymmetrical.

23. (Currently amended) A hard copy apparatus comprising:

a media holddown device including a platen, a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media positioned on the platen, the vacuum chambers having a plurality of openings arranged to provide permanent air communication between the platen and a vacuum source, a

hollow vacuum conduit connected to said vacuum chambers, and ~~[[a]]~~ the vacuum source connected to said hollow vacuum conduit, said vacuum chambers being part of a first component and said hollow vacuum conduit being part of a second, separate component.

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24. (Currently amended) A hard copy apparatus comprising:

a media holddown device including a platen and a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media positioned on the platen with respective walls separating adjacent pairs of chambers along the platen,
 10 the vacuum chambers having a plurality of openings arranged to provide permanent air communication between the platen and a vacuum source and to connect the vacuum chambers each being connected via one or more respective openings to a hollow vacuum conduit which is connected to ~~[[a]]~~ the vacuum source, wherein the number, size and/or pattern of said openings are different
 15 for at least some of said vacuum chambers.

25. (Currently amended) A hard copy apparatus comprising:

a media holddown device including a platen and a plurality of vacuum chambers for applying a negative pressure to a media advancing across the
 20 platen, the vacuum chambers having a plurality of openings arranged to provide permanent air communication between the platen and a vacuum source, wherein for at least part of the length of the platen, said vacuum chambers are arranged one behind the other in the direction of media advance and are connected to a ~~same~~ the vacuum source through a hollow vacuum
 25 conduit.

26. (Original) A device according to claim 1, wherein the platen has holes, at least some of which have a cross section which is asymmetrical.

27. (New) A device according to claim 1, further comprising:

5 a hollow vacuum conduit connected to the vacuum chambers;

wherein the vacuum source is connected to the hollow vacuum conduit, the vacuum chambers are part of a first component, and the hollow vacuum conduit is part of a second, separate component.

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